

the big crisis was; China made everything that was in it.

We have got a tremendous problem on our hands, and the only way to protect the American people is to continue with our technology buildup to provide a reasonable shield.

This test, and I commend all of those involved, gives us hope for the beginning of an initiative started by former President Reagan, and I commend him here today. He had the vision and the foresight to see that America would be challenged by maybe even rogue nations with nuclear capability that was illegally gained from America.

Beam me up here.

I want to join the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) in saluting all of those involved, and recommend to the Congress of the United States that we go forward and continue to fund this initiative. Our number one priority is national security, and we should get that job done.

Mr. SPRATT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT).

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from South Carolina for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, apparently I am the only person who is going to come out here and raise a question. Everybody who has watched the military industrial complex develop weapons systems must be amazed that the day after something happens in the Pacific, we run out on the floor in this virtual reality Congress to make a PR event, which will be in the newspapers, as though we have succeeded. Now we must put out \$60 billion or \$100 billion.

If you listen carefully to the words of the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT), this thing has failed over and over again. This is only the second time out of four, in a system where you put the problem out there and you have the answer, and you shoot at it, and two out of four times you have missed.

Now, how can anybody be excited about a system like that? If I know what the pitcher is going to throw and I stand here, I am going to hit it. Everybody knows that. That is why they hide the pitcher's signals between the catcher's legs. They do not want people to know at bat what the pitcher is going to throw. But here we have this system, right here and right here, and twice we missed it; and we are out here congratulating.

I do not say anything about the employees. Boeing has worked on all kinds of these programs, but we never came out and congratulated them the first time they succeeded. This is simply to build up a momentum in this society for a system which, as the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) says, is driving the Chinese and the Russians together.

To put this system up, we have to tear up the ABM treaty. The Russians have said do not do it; it has kept peace for 50 years. The Chinese have said do not do it.

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Why are we out here whipping up the public to believe this is a good idea?

I am going to vote against the resolution; not against the people, but against the purpose of it.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I think one aspect of this resolution that the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and I have coauthored is that it does not speak to the politics of missile defense or the ABM Treaty or the relationship of the Soviet Union and the United States. What it does speak to is a technological challenge that we gave lots of people, many of whom make great sacrifices to work in the uniform of the United States or who go to work everyday in various places around this country, working either for the government or for private business, whether they are physicists or engineers or blue collar workers, working on a program that I would state again is monumental in its success.

Once again, both of these systems were going three times faster than a high-powered rifle bullet, and they collided 148 miles above the earth, some 4,800 miles off into the Pacific, an extraordinary thing. It is like having somebody stand in San Diego with a high-powered rifle shooting to the center of the country and somebody standing in New York doing the same thing, except the high-powered rifles really went three times as fast as an ordinary high-powered rifle, and having those little bullets collide in midair.

Now, I think that is an extraordinary thing. Indeed, it is something that a lot of critics of this system said was impossible: hitting a bullet with a bullet. But I think if we look at the resolution that the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and I have cosponsored, it does not say that this is the end of the line and that somehow we have now achieved absolute defense against incoming ballistic missiles.

What it does say, and I quote: "The House of Representatives understands that testing of ballistic missile defenses will involve many failures as well as successes in the future. The House of Representatives, nonetheless, commends the effort and ingenuity of those who worked so hard to make the test a success."

Mr. Speaker, when Billy Mitchell came back to the Coolidge administration in the 1920s, one of his messages was that we had entered the age of air power, whether Americans liked it or not. He recommended to a then Republican administration that they spend a lot of money developing air power. Well, we had a number of budget hawks who did not want to do that, and we did not do as much as we should have. As a result of that, we were not as ready as we should have been for World War II.

Well, today, Mr. Speaker, and particularly since the Gulf War when Americans were killed for the first

time with ballistic missiles fired by Saddam Hussein, we realize that we live now not in the age of air power but in the age of missiles. When we look at the array of military systems across the board that we have, and the gentleman from South Carolina and I work on a daily basis with lots of other great Democrat and Republican members of the Committee on Armed Services, we know that we build systems to stop ships. We build systems to detect submarines. We build systems to handle tactical aircraft, fighter aircraft. We build systems to take down bombers. We build systems to handle and that can handle capably just about every type of offensive weapon that an enemy could throw at us, except one.

So the one question I have always asked the Secretary of Defense when he appears before myself and the other members of the Committee on Armed Services is: Could you today, could you today stop a single incoming ICBM, Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, coming into an American city? And the answer always is, whether it is a Democrat or Republican administration: No; today we cannot do that.

Well, that is what we are working toward, Democrats and Republicans, people in uniform and people out of uniform, is to achieve that capability.

I think that it is very important for us to understand, and the reason the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SPRATT) and I put this language in, acknowledging that there are going to be failures in this testing program as well as successes and the difficulty of this program. We are going to have decoys. That is, when the offensive missile puts its warhead, projects its warhead off of the booster system, it is going to have perhaps decoys that would attract the interceptor missile; and the interceptor missile would end up hitting decoys, not being able to discriminate between a decoy and a real warhead. We have to work that problem. We have to be able to handle that problem.

We are going to have, in some cases, perhaps evasive maneuvers. We are going to have lots of problems. We are going to have in some cases multiple shots; that is, a number of warheads coming in that we have to handle at one time. We may have to handle the effects of a nuclear burst at some point.

On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, the alternative is for us to do nothing. The old saying is, "You don't do anything until you can do everything, so you do nothing;" and I think that is an inappropriate position for the United States to take. If we do not try to build a defense and do not try to develop this interception capability, this will be the first time in this century that the United States has looked at a weapon, at an offensive weapon, and decided that they are not going to try to learn how to defend against it. I think that would be a mistake.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.